Development and Initial Validation of the Response to Stressful Experiences Scale (RSES)

NAVY AND MARINE CORPS COMBAT & OPERATIONAL STRESS CONFERENCE 2010:
"TAKING ACTION, MEASURING RESULTS"

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Psychological Resilience

- What is it?
- Why is it important?
- Are we measuring the default?
- Can we teach it?
- Can we train it?
- Can we bottle it up and administer it?

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	Pathology	Healthy
High Risk	Vulnerable	Resilient
Low Risk	Unique Stressor	Resistant

Why A New Scale?

- Assess *process* of resilience rather than *state* of being resilient
- Validate in sample known to have exposure to *high-magnitude* stressors
- Additional facets of multi-dimensional construct (i.e., *incremental validity*)

National Center for PTSD
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

N = 1049

1st Battalion 25th Marine Combat Infantry Unit New England USMC Reserve

34th Combat Aviation Brigade Minnesota National Guard

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N = 1049 (Sample Composition)

- Active-Duty, Reserve, & National Guard
- Officer & Enlisted
- USMC, US Navy & US Army
- Multiple Combat Deployments & Non-Deployed
- Combat Infantry, Support, Aviation, Technicians, Medical
- Time in service range [0 – 20+ years]

Reliability

- Elimination of poor performing items
- Result = 22-item scale

- Cronbach's alpha = .91-.93
- Test/retest = .87 (1-week)
- Consistency of factor clusters = .67-.87

Factor Analyses

Best Model = 6 Factor Solution

57% of variability (RMSEA = .04)

1. Cognitive Flexibility
2. Spirituality
3. Active Coping
4. Self Efficacy
5. Meaning-making
6. Restoration

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Cognitive Flexibility

... adjusting beliefs about the self, the world, and the future

... confronting fears

... reframing stressful events as opportunities

... overcoming cognitive and behavioral avoidance

Spirituality

… belief that life has dimension beyond physical

… power greater than the ‘self’

… power can guide, shape, influence, and inform experiences

Active Coping

... thoughts, behaviors, emotions

... aimed at altering external or internal sources of stress

Self-efficacy

... expectation of ability to direct own fate

... expectation of managing reactions effectively

... confidence in ability to respond adaptively in response to threat

Meaning-making

... appreciating informational value of stressors

... recognizing stress-related thoughts, behaviors as useful

... living with intentionality

... extracting purpose from suffering and trials

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Restoration

... self-care intended to maintain stability and rejuvenate

... repair of stress related damage

... preparation for anticipated stressors

Validity

- Connor Davidson (CD-RISC): r = .61-.81
- Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS): r = .38

- MMPI-2 (Neuroticism): r = -.35
- Satisfaction with Life Scale: r = .48

- Unit Cohesion (DRRI): r = .38
- Post-deployment Support (DRRI): r = .56

Validity (continued)

- Beck Depression Inventory: r = -.30
- Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9): r = -.51

- PTSD Checklist (PCL-M): r = -.23 to -.39

- RSES and Combat Experiences:

  57% of variance in PTSD symptoms
  (in 2 independent military samples)

Future Directions

- Neural Mechanisms of Optimal Performance (UCSD/Optibrain/NHRC)
- Predictors of Operational Performance in Immersive Training (NHRC/ONR)
- Israeli Defense Force (IDF)
- Civilian sample validation

RSES Development Team

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